FROM THE EDITORS

Our call for offprints has produced a very positive response. The editors of Nestor gratefully acknowledge this support and hope that it will continue. Your cooperation in this matter not only very much helps our data collecting efforts, but it also ensures the Nestor community of swift and more complete information. Thank you.

ERRATUM

p. 1825 $840539  Read: palais for palis

COMMUNICATIONS

The Archaeologisches Institut der Universitaet Koeln, W. Germany, is holding a colloquium on July 7 and 8 entitled, "Forschungen zur Aegaeischen Vorgeschichte: das Ende der mykenischen Welt." The colloquium will include topics such as the Late Mycenaean culture on Crete and the Late Bronze Age in Cyprus as well as the relations between Mycenaean and earlier civilizations on the Greek mainland. Scholars interested either in delivering papers or in attending the colloquium should contact Dr. Eberhard Thomas, Archaeologisches Institut der Universitaet Koeln, Albertus Magnus Platz, D 5000 Koeln 41, W. Germany, or Dr. Paul Yule, Kommission fuer Allgemeine und Vergleichende Archaeologie, DAI, Endenicher Str. 41, D 5300 Bonn 1, W. Germany.


The proceedings from the symposium "Pylos Comes Alive: Industry and Administration in a Mycenaean Palace" have been published (see the announcement, Nestor, January 1984, p. 1783). Copies are available from the Archaeological Institute of America, P.O. Box 1901, Kenmore Station, Boston, MA 02215. Payment is required in advance (U.S. $10.00 postage included).


FORUM

To the Editors:

The Linear B texts are now in machine-readable form at the University of Minnesota. The text is in two forms: a) spacing preserved and b) compressed. The Pylos texts have been updated by Dr. E.L. Bennett, Jr., and we are hoping for some comments on the Knossos texts from Cambridge. We are not promising perfection at this point, but we have produced a useful concordance and index. If you are interested in obtaining a tape containing the Linear B files or a copy of the concordance or index, please contact me at the address below. The cost of the tape is $100, and of the concordance or index is $25 each, plus postage. We are seeking funds to support 'tagging' the text, so that we can provide specialized indices of places, people, etc.
The essence of the method underlying the previous worksheets is to expose hypotheses and deductions of increasing complexity to 'falsification'. The insistence on the Aegean-Oriental koiné in this sense more 'powerful' in that it increases the opportunities for such 'falsifications'. As a bonus it offers possibilities of 'feedback' from the Aegean to the Orient (see below).

The Cretan Seal (fig. 211) presents such a challenge for it exhibits five motives. For three of them solutions have been proposed. The shield is the emblem of the Hero God Alexaus. We are committed to G'ousas and G'owia as parents of the Young God, whose diacritic is the palm tree / branch. In such a group a strong contender for the 'impaled triangle' would be his consort Astarte, who in Cyprus is textually equated with Wannasa. The deduction is complex and precisely targeted. We expect a combination of palm tree / branch and 'impaled triangle' in connexion with Astarte. R.W. Barnett writes (Nimrud Ivories, 109):

'The grotto of Astarte at Wasta between Tyre and Sidon and that at 'Adluyn / just south of Sidon / with their numerous graffiti depict both the crudest fertility symbol of Astarte, the pubic triangle and a palm tree or branch.'

Textual commentary is provided by T. Jacobsen (Treasures of Darkness, 43-47). Inanna on the bridal couch awaiting her Lord 'sings the praises of her pubic triangle with its as yet sparse growth of hairs ...' It is a 'stubble field ...' 'Who will be their ploughman?', she asks. The reply comes 'May the King, Dumuzi, plough the land for you.' The same cult act, the climax of the New Year Festival, is implicit in the union of Demeter with Iasion in the fallow field (Od. 5.125).

The script itself is witness to the antiquity of the symbolism. S.W. Kramer (Sumeriana 304, fig. 6, 4) traces the development of the cuneiform sign for WOMAN back to the 'impaled triangle'.

On the Aegean side the symbol appears on the Cycladic 'mirrors' in contexts which include the sun-disk and the 8-pointed star. Another Cycladic Leitmotif is the nude female idol which emphasizes the pubic triangle. Later (MM III) is the evidence from Crete. The excavations at Arkhanes / Phourni brought to light such figurines placed between rocks in a tomb. Some of them were seemingly mother-daughter pairs. Of particular interest is the small ivory idol since its pubic triangle is studded with borings intended for the insertion of representations of the pubic hairs. J. Sakellarakis opined the presence of Cycladic sculptors. At all events the Cyclades appear as a staging point in the diffusion of the symbol (and presumably the cult) from the Orient.
Alexeus

Why should the Shield God appear so constantly in this context of 'underworld' deities? Evans was convinced of the religious significance of the shield. His examples range downwards from Shaft Grave IV, find place of the sword blade with 8-shields flanked by running spirals— a water symbol, cf. the stirrup vase (PM IV, 301, fig. 235) where the shield within water symbolism is associated with the rosette. Evans also detected a Minoan shield carved on the forehead of the Little Palace bull-ryton (PM IV, 302, fig. 236).

Nilsson (GR I, 479) also points to the presence of an armed man in the highly archaic representations in the Sanctuary of Despoina at Lykosoura. Demeter and Despoina are depicted side by side. Artemis (with a dog) flanks Demeter. Alongside Despoina is an armed man, Anytos, one of the Titans, who are gods in Tartaros. Evidently Despoina = Wanassa and Anytos = Alexeus.

Turning to the Orient we find evidence for a Shield God among the Hittites (O.R. Gurney, Aspects of Hittite Religion 13, with lit.). An armed god appears on an Akkadian seal impression (*see* H. Frankfort, Kingship and the Gods, fig. 50) which now (an instance of 'feed-back') invites reconsideration. The figures stand on mountains which may represent Hades (Jacobsen, op. cit. 53). Three underworld deities are immediately recognizable: (1) Enki, (2) the winged Inanna, with (3), immediately alongside, a dead bush = Dumuzi in the Underworld. In the centre, flanked r. by (1) and l. by (2 + 3) is the Sun God half plunged into the mountain—surely the Sun God of the Underworld. Extreme left, facing the central group, stands a god with bow and sword flanked by a roaring lion (a 'liberator' god instrumental in the release of the captive god?)

There remains the cross under the bull's belly. Evans (PM I, 513 f., figs. 370, 371) noted the symbolic crosses which often appear on bulls. When set within a circle this becomes a four-spoked wheel. He opined they were both symbols for the sun. Furumark (MP, 459 ff.) interpreted the 'Circus Pot' in this sense and Barnett voices a similar opinion for the Oriental occurrences. The long discussion has been clinched by an Old Babylonian seal (Porada Thebes No. 3). It had been reworked by a Cypriot engraver who transformed a one-time sun-disk into a circle with an inscribed cross. This sign also appears under the arm of the enthroned Syrian bull-headed Baal-Hadad who has the 'rosette' (eight-pointed star in a disk), the emblem of Astarte, between his horns (see Gray, Near Eastern Mythology, 70). For an early example of the 'cross' in a similar context see the seal from Mallia (PM II 50, fig. 23), where it appears flanked by a bull's head and a bow, the last being the symbol for the Warrior God. Our Fig. 212 illustrates further the intricate cross-connexion of the symbolism. The Minotaur + Impaled Triangle is closely matched by another with 8-pointed star (PM I, 359, fig. 260 d). This leads back to the Cycladic 'mirrors' with an 8-pointed star set within a sun-disk.

The failure of the two attempts at 'falsification' is an advance in that it saddles us with an even more complex iconographic 'vocabulary and syntax'. This is inherent in the method. In the last resort the supreme test must be faced: the highly complex 'language' evolved must enable us to read the 'picture book' clearly and consistently.

L.R. Palmer
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Minoan Thalassocracy


Concilium


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